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SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES

Proposal of the delegation of Bolivia[1/]

The delegation of Bolivia, realizing that the Working Group has not much time left for finishing its work, wishes to present forthwith its specific views on the recommendations which it considers that the Second Conference should adopt on the subject of special measures in favour of the land-locked countries. It is not our intention to make a general statement on this item, as our basic position was expressed in the general debate of the Conference.

We simply wish to reiterate that, as far as Bolivia in particular is concerned, its situation as a land-locked country presents a number of legal, political and economic aspects which it seems opportune to describe. We have already stated that our country, although it originally possessed a sea coast, became land-locked through unfortunate circumstances which it would be inappropriate to go into now. For this reason, we wish to point out that Bolivia's attitude in regard to the problem of its land-locked situation, has two basic facets. One involves action leading to a solution of the basic problem by obtaining a sea-port of its own and the second involves pragmatic action leading to an immediate result in the framework of international bilateral, regional and multilateral co-operation. In view of the character of the work of this Conference, my delegation is pursuing the second line of action. We are doing so, as we are fully convinced that the objective of the first line of action is in no way incompatible with a search for immediate and practical solutions.

1/ The attached proposals were made in a statement by the representative of Bolivia at the second meeting of the Working Group. The representative of Bolivia requested, and the Working Group agreed, that the text of his statement should be circulated as a working paper of the Group.

We also believe that the latter are no substitute for Bolivia's basic aspiration to find the fundamental solution to which I have referred and which would be attained through machinery and instrumentr other than those which are being considered by this Conference.

With this brief introduction, Mr. Chairman, I wish to submit for consideration by the Working Group a text which might serve as a basis for discussion. I again emphasize that the proposals we are making should, we feel, be adopted as recommendations of the Second Conference, for implementation in different quarters and at different levels.

The land-locked countries are faced with special problems which are hampering their economic development and the expansion of their trade. Intensive international co-operation must be encouraged if these problems are to be overcome. This co-operation may be composed of three equal elements: financial and technical assistance provided by the developed countries and by international organizations, bilateral arrangements and consultations between land-locked countries and countries of transit and regional and sub-regional co-operation programmes. I recognize that we are only taking the first step in this field and that, consequently, we are perhaps unable clearly to identify the measures which must be taken. However, it is clear that the time has come to take concerted international action in favour of the land-locked countries. Adoption by the Conference of the ideas we are putting forward may be an important contribution to the gradually increasing efforts to develop a genuine strategy in favour of the land-locked countries.

Proposals

I. The transit countries and the land-locked countries should strengthen their systems of consultation, whether bilaterally or under regional or sub-regional co-operation programmes, in order jointly to examine the problems which the land-locked countries face in expanding their trade and furthering their economic development, and should seek solutions adapted to the nature of each particular case, by concluding new agreements or improving existing ones.

II. Transit countries and land-locked countries should likewise hold consultations and negotiations with a view to granting or extending, for the benefit of the latter countries, facilities for their transit trade, giving special attention to the following points:

(a) Granting free zones in transit ports on rivers or seas;

(b) Improving port installations and services;

(c) Facilitating the establishment by the land-locked countries of their own means of transport and communications, such as railways, oil, gas and multipurpose pipelines, etc.;

(d) Progressively eliminating administrative and other formalities affecting the transit trade of land-locked countries;

(e) Jointly executing programmes and projects for the establishment, expansion and/or improvement of means of transport and port installations serving the transit trade of the land-locked countries.

III. Without prejudice to other action and methods of a multilateral character, transit countries, land-locked countries and other countries within each region should study and apply special methods of financial and technical co-operation for the benefit of the land-locked countries, to ensure a greater participation by them in regional and international trade.

IV. The developed countries should, where appropriate, give special financial and technical assistance to the land-locked developing countries by means of bilateral agreements or through the international organizations, especially by carrying out programmes and projects designed to overcome the obstacles resulting from the situation of the latter countries which hamper the expansion of their trade and their economic development. Such assistance should be offered on flexible terms and in considerable volume.

V. Through the exchange of experience and information, the developed land-locked countries might lend special assistance to the developing land-locked countries in working out co-operative international solutions and courses of action.

VI. The UNCTAD secretariat should establish one or more groups of experts to prepare studies on the various special trade and development problems of the land-locked countries, and make recommendations on international action that could be taken with a view to solving those problems. In the first stage, these studies could include the following aspects:

(a) The present situation with regard to existing international legislation on free transit and other subjects of concern to the land-locked countries, including bilateral and multilateral agreements and treaties;

(b) Legislation, administrative practices and other provisions of an internal nature relating to the transit trade of the land-locked countries, with special reference to the following: (i) legislation, regulations and other provisions relating to supervision, administrative formalities, inspection, etc. in respect of goods in transit; (ii) provisions relating to the levying of fiscal, customs and other charges on goods in transit; (iii) regulations, administrative practices and other provisions applying to ships, vehicles, railway carriages and other means of transport of the land-locked countries in the countries of transit;

(c) Special problems that in general hamper the expansion of trade and the promotion of the economic development of the developing land-locked countries.

VII. The international financing agencies at both the world and regional levels should provide financial assistance on a priority basis to the developing land-locked countries for the execution of programmes and projects aimed at solving the problems inherent in their situation which hamper their trade and development, particularly those relating to the improvement of their transport infrastructure with the object of facilitating their access to shipping routes.

VIII. There should be established in the Committee on Shipping of the Trade and Development Board a standing sub-committee or working group to study the special questions relating to the trade and development of the developing land-locked countries, and that body should recommend to other UNCTAD bodies or other United Nations organs, and to the regional and sub-regional organizations, specific measures of co-operation for adoption.